

<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/appendix-docket-entry-20-march-1826-people-v-js/1#full-transcript> (accessed Feb. 2, 2021)

## Document Transcript

PEOPLE OF STATE OF NEW YORK,)  
VS.)  
JOSEPH SMITH.)

Warrant issued upon written complaint<sup>1</sup> upon oath of Peter G. Bridgman who informed that one Joseph Smith of Bainbridge was a disorderly person and an Impostor. Prisoner brought before court 20 March. Prisoner examined, says, that he came from town of Palmyra and, had been at the house of Josiah Stowel[1]s in Bainbridge most of time since, had small part of times been employed in looking for mines,—but the major par[t] had been employed by said Stowel on his farm, and going to school, That he had a certain stone, which he had occasionally looked at to determine where hidden treasures in the bowels of the earth were, that he professed to tell in this manner where gold mines were a distance under ground, and had looked for Mr. Stow[e] several times and informed him where h[e] could find those treasures, and Mr. Sto[w]el had been engaged in digging for them—that at Palmyra he had pretended to tell by looking at this stone, where coined money was buried in Pennsylvania, and while at Palmyra he had frequently ascertained in that way where lost property was of various kinds; that he has occasionally been in the habit of looking through this stone to find lost property for 3 years, but of late had pretty much given it up on account of injuring his Health, especially his eyes, made them sore—that he did not solicit business of this kind, and had always rather declined having anything to do with this business.

Josiah Stowel sworn, says that, prisoner had been at his house, something like 5 months, had been employed by him to work on farm part of time—that he pretended to have skill of telling where hidden treasures in the earth were by means of looking through a certain stone—that Prisoner had looked for him some times once to tell him about money buried on Bend Mountain in Pennsylvania, once for gold on Monument hill, and once for Salt Spring and that he positively knew that the Prisoner could tell and possessed<sup>2</sup> the art of seeing those valuable treasures through the medium of said stone—that he found the digging part at Bend and Monument Hill, as prisoner represented it—that prisoner had looked through said stone for Deacon Attlton—for a mine did not exactly find it but got a (piece) of oar which resembled gold, he thinks; that Prisoner had told by means of this stone where, a Mr. Bacon had buried money, that he and prisoner had been in search of it; that prisoner said that it was on a certain Root of a stump 5 feet from surface of the earth, and with it would be found a tail feather that said Stowel and prisoner thereupon commenced digging, found a tail feather, but money was gone, that he supposed that money moved down—that prisoner did not<sup>3</sup> offer his services; that he never deceived him,—that Prisoner looked through stone and described Josiah Stowels house and out houses, while at Palmyra at Simpson Stowels correctly, that he had told about a painted tree with a man's hand painted upon it by means of said stone; that he had been in company with prisoner digging for gold, and had the most implicit faith in Prisoners skill.

Horace Stowel[1] sworn, says he see Prisoner look into that strange stone,<sup>4</sup> pretending to tell where a chest of dollars were buried in Windsor a number of miles distant, marked out size of chest in the leaves on ground.<sup>5</sup>

Arad Stowel[1] sworn, says that he went to see whether Prisoner could convince him that he possessed the skill that he professed to have, upon which prisoner laid a Book open<sup>6</sup> upon a White Cloth, and proposed looking through another stone which was white and transparent; held the stone to the candle, turned his back<sup>7</sup> to book and read, the deception appeared so palpable that<sup>8</sup> went off disgusted.

McMaster, sworn, says he went with Arad Stowel, to be convinced of Prisoner's skill,<sup>9</sup> and likewise came away disgusted, finding the deception so palpable.<sup>10</sup> Prisoner pretended to him that he could discern objects at a distance by holding this white stone to the sun or candle; that prisoner rather declined looking into a Hat at his dark-colored stone as he said that it hurt his eyes.

Johathan Thompson, says that Prisoner was requested to look Yoemans<sup>11</sup> for chest of money—did look and pretended to know where it was, and that Prisoner, Thompson and Yoemans went in search of it; that Smith arrived at Spot first, was in night, that Smith looked in Hat while there and when very dark, and told how the chest was situated—after digging several feet struck upon something sounding like a board or plank—Prisoner would not look again pretending that he was alarmed, the last time that he looked<sup>12</sup> on account of the circumstances relating to the trunk being buried came all fresh to his mind, that the last time that he looked, he discovered distinctly, the two Indians who buried the trunk, that a quarrel ensued between them and that one of said Indians was killed by the other and thrown into the hole beside of the trunk, to guard it as he supposed—Thompson says that he believes in the prisoners professed skill, that the board he struck his spade upon was probably the chest but on account of an enchantment, the trunk kept settling away from under them while digging, that notwithstanding they continued constantly removing the dirt, yet the trunk kept about the same distance from them, Prisoner said that it appeared to him that salt might be found in [Bainbridge](#), and that he is certain that Prisoner, can, divine things by means of said Stone and Hat;<sup>13</sup> that as evidence of fact—Prisoner looked into his hat to tell him about some money Witness lost 16 years ago, and that he described the man that Witness supposed had taken it, and disposition of money. And therefore the court find the defendant guilty—<sup>14</sup>cost warrant, 19 cts, complaint upon oath 25.7 Witnesses 87½, Recognizance 25, Mittimus 19, Recognizance or witness 75, Subpoena 18—\$268.<sup>15</sup> [p. [1]]

## Footnotes

1

The *Religious Encyclopaedia* version omits “upon written complaint.” (Tuttle, “Mormons,” in *Religious Encyclopaedia*, 2:1576.)

### Comprehensive Works Cited

Tuttle, Daniel S. “Mormons.” In *A Religious Encyclopaedia: or Dictionary of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology*, edited by Philip Schaff, 1575–1581. 2 vols. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883.

2

The *Religious Encyclopaedia* version has “professed.” (Tuttle, “Mormons,” in *Religious Encyclopaedia*, 2:1576.)

Comprehensive Works Cited

Tuttle, Daniel S. “Mormons.” In *A Religious Encyclopaedia: or Dictionary of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology*, edited by Philip Schaff, 1575–1581. 2 vols. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883.

3

Neither the *Religious Encyclopaedia* version nor the *Fraser’s Magazine* version has this “not.” (Tuttle, “Mormons,” in *Religious Encyclopaedia*, 2:1576; Trial proceedings, Bainbridge, NY, 20 Mar. 1826, State of New York v. JS, [J.P. Ct. 1826], in “The Original Prophet,” *Fraser’s Magazine*, Feb. 1873, 229–230.)

Comprehensive Works Cited

Tuttle, Daniel S. “Mormons.” In *A Religious Encyclopaedia: or Dictionary of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology*, edited by Philip Schaff, 1575–1581. 2 vols. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883.

“The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt Lake City.” *Fraser’s Magazine* 7, no. 28 (Feb. 1873): 225–235.

4

Instead of “that strange stone,” the *Religious Encyclopaedia* version has “hat through stone.” (Tuttle, “Mormons,” in *Religious Encyclopaedia*, 2:1576.)

Comprehensive Works Cited

Tuttle, Daniel S. “Mormons.” In *A Religious Encyclopaedia: or Dictionary of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology*, edited by Philip Schaff, 1575–1581. 2 vols. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883.

5

This paragraph is not found in the *Fraser’s Magazine* version. (Trial proceedings, Bainbridge, NY, 20 Mar. 1826, State of New York v. JS, [J.P. Ct. 1826], in “The Original Prophet,” *Fraser’s Magazine*, Feb. 1873, 229–230.)

Comprehensive Works Cited

“The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt Lake City.” *Fraser’s Magazine* 7, no. 28 (Feb. 1873): 225–235.

6

The version in *Fraser’s Magazine* omits “open.” (Trial proceedings, Bainbridge, NY, 20 Mar. 1826, State of New York v. JS, [J.P. Ct. 1826], in “The Original Prophet,” *Fraser’s Magazine*, Feb. 1873, 229–230.)

Comprehensive Works Cited

“The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt Lake City.” *Fraser’s Magazine* 7, no. 28 (Feb. 1873): 225–235.

7

The version in *Fraser’s Magazine* has “head.” (Trial proceedings, Bainbridge, NY, 20 Mar. 1826, State of New York v. JS, [J.P. Ct. 1826], in “The Original Prophet,” *Fraser’s Magazine*, Feb. 1873, 229–230.)

Comprehensive Works Cited

“The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt Lake City.” *Fraser’s Magazine* 7, no. 28 (Feb. 1873): 225–235.

8

The version in *Fraser’s Magazine* adds “witness” here. (Trial proceedings, Bainbridge, NY, 20 Mar. 1826, State of New York v. JS, [J.P. Ct. 1826], in “The Original Prophet,” *Fraser’s Magazine*, Feb. 1873, 229–230.)

Comprehensive Works Cited

“The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt Lake City.” *Fraser’s Magazine* 7, no. 28 (Feb. 1873): 225–235.

9

The version in *Fraser’s Magazine* omits “to be convinced of Prisoner’s skill.” (Trial proceedings, Bainbridge, NY, 20 Mar. 1826, State of New York v. JS, [J.P. Ct. 1826], in “The Original Prophet,” *Fraser’s Magazine*, Feb. 1873, 229–230.)

Comprehensive Works Cited

“The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt Lake City.” *Fraser’s Magazine* 7, no. 28 (Feb. 1873): 225–235.

[10](#)

The version in *Fraser's Magazine* omits “finding the deception so palpable.” (Trial proceedings, Bainbridge, NY, 20 Mar. 1826, State of New York v. JS, [J.P. Ct. 1826], in “The Original Prophet,” *Fraser's Magazine*, Feb. 1873, 229–230.)

[Comprehensive Works Cited](#)

“The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt Lake City.” *Fraser's Magazine* 7, no. 28 (Feb. 1873): 225–235.

[11](#)

The version in *Fraser's Magazine* omits “Yoemans.” (Trial proceedings, Bainbridge, NY, 20 Mar. 1826, State of New York v. JS, [J.P. Ct. 1826], in “The Original Prophet,” *Fraser's Magazine*, Feb. 1873, 229–230.)

[Comprehensive Works Cited](#)

“The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt Lake City.” *Fraser's Magazine* 7, no. 28 (Feb. 1873): 225–235.

[12](#)

The version in *Fraser's Magazine* omits “the last time that he looked.” (Trial proceedings, Bainbridge, NY, 20 Mar. 1826, State of New York v. JS, [J.P. Ct. 1826], in “The Original Prophet,” *Fraser's Magazine*, Feb. 1873, 229–230.)

[Comprehensive Works Cited](#)

“The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt Lake City.” *Fraser's Magazine* 7, no. 28 (Feb. 1873): 225–235.

[13](#)

The version in *Fraser's Magazine* omits “and Hat.” (Trial proceedings, Bainbridge, NY, 20 Mar. 1826, State of New York v. JS, [J.P. Ct. 1826], in “The Original Prophet,” *Fraser's Magazine*, Feb. 1873, 229–230.)

[Comprehensive Works Cited](#)

“The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt Lake City.” *Fraser's Magazine* 7, no. 28 (Feb. 1873): 225–235.

[14](#)

The *Religious Encyclopaedia* version ends here. (Tuttle, “Mormons,” in *Religious Encyclopaedia*, 2:1576.)

Comprehensive Works Cited

Tuttle, Daniel S. “Mormons.” In *A Religious Encyclopaedia: or Dictionary of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology*, edited by Philip Schaff, 1575–1581. 2 vols. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883.

15

The version in *Fraser’s Magazine* notes the costs as follows: “Warrant, 19c. Complaint upon oath, 25½c. Seven witnesses, 87½c. Recognisances, 25c. Mittimus, 19c. Recognisances of witnesses, 75c. Subpoena, 18c.—\$2.68.” (Trial proceedings, Bainbridge, NY, 20 Mar. 1826, State of New York v. JS, [J.P. Ct. 1826], in “The Original Prophet,” *Fraser’s Magazine*, Feb. 1873, 229–230.)

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